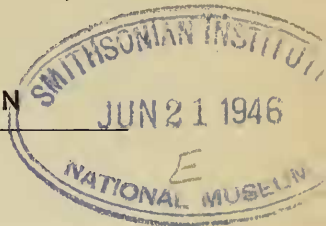


PROCEEDINGS
OF THE
BIOLOGICAL SOCIETY OF WASHINGTONA NEW WORM-LIZARD (*ANCYLOCRANIUM BARKERI*)
FROM TANGANYIKA TERRITORY.

By ARTHUR LOVERIDGE

Among some reptiles recently presented to the Museum of Comparative Zoölogy by Mr. R. de la B. Barker, is an extraordinary amphisbaenid of a genus hitherto unknown from south of the equator. Not only is it the first member of the peculiar genus to be found in Tanganyika Territory, but its nearest relative occurs nearly a thousand miles to the north at Caitoi in Somalia. The new species was taken by Mr. Barker near the Mbemkuru River (*circa* 9°30' S., 39°40' E.) which empties into Mzungu Bay between the headlands of Ras Mbemkuru and Ras Mawedi on the coast between Kilwa and Lindi, though rather nearer to the latter.

Except for the absence of a well-marked circular fold separating head and body, this new species is referable to the Genus *Baikia* as recently (1941, Bull. Mus. Comp. Zoöl., 87, p. 368) redefined. Two species were referred to Gray's *Baikia* until Parker (1942, Bull. Mus. Comp. Zoöl., 91, p. 57, fig. 7a) proposed *Ancylocranium* for *somalica* (Scortecci, 1930). The East African lizard was separated from the western *africana* Gray on account of its possessing a bony crest formed by the compressed anterior elements of the skull, and because the extra-columella showed an anterior dilation. Parker's figure of the crested *somalicum* was based on a cleaned skull; that of *africana* on an x-ray of the holotype, as no second specimen has been taken since the discovery of *africana* sixty-five years ago.

That I might ascertain to which of the two genera the new species *barkeri* should be assigned, half-a-dozen x-ray photographs of it were taken through the courtesy of Dr. M. C. Sosman of the Peter Bent Brigham Hospital of Boston. In none of these photographs is the extra-columella sufficient distinct for me to say definitely that it is, or is not, dilated anteriorly. In the matter of the anterior crest, however, three of the photographs undoubtedly conform to Parker's figure of *Ancylocranium*. The other three resemble Parker's figure of *Baikia* in lacking a crest. As all six x-rays are of the same lizard the apparent difference must be due to some slight variation in position at the time the photographs were taken. As it seemed possible that the same might have oc-

curred with Parker's x-ray of *Baikia*, I wrote Parker who (18. ii. 46) assures me that he verified the absence of the crest in *Baikia* by dissection. As the Tanganyika reptile has at least one of the characters of *Ancylocranium*, it is referred to that genus.

On geographical grounds there appears no reason for separating *Ancylocranium* from *Baikia* for other amphisbaenid genera like *Amphisbaena*, *Monopeltis*, and *Dalophia*, have a trans-African distribution.

***Ancylocranium barkeri* sp. nov.**

Type.—Museum of Comparative Zoölogy, No. 48,950, a ♂, from Mbemkuru River, Lindi Province, Tanganyika Territory. Collected by Mr. R. de la B. Barker in 1941.

Diagnosis.—In some ways nearer to *B. africana*, but distinguished from its geographically nearest relative as follows:

- A single pair of shields (parietals) on occiput behind rostral; 31 (20 + 11) segments in a midbody annulus; median ventrals in a single transversely dilated series; 222 annuli on body, 5 on tail, but posterior half of tail without annuli; range: Tanganyika Territory *barkeri*
- Two pairs of shields (postfrontals and parietals) on occiput behind rostral; 49-55 (27-32 + 21-24) segments in a midbody annulus; median ventrals in a double series; 186-199 annuli on body, 6-8 on tail extending to the tip; range: Somalia and British Somaliland *somaticum*

Description.—Rostral enormous, compressed, arched, with sharp cutting edge, nostril pierced in the rostral, slightly above and anterior to the groove separating rostral from first upper labial; neither nasal nor nasal suture; no prefrontal; no frontal; no postfrontals; a single pair of shields (parietals) on occiput behind rostral and immediately above a narrow, vertically-elongate ocular that is preceded by a slightly broader preocular and followed by a similarly vertically-elongate postocular; eye hidden; no temporals; upper labials 3, second largest and immediately below the preocular, the ocular resting in an angle between the second and third labials; two pairs of elongate sublinguals of which the anterior pair (postmentals) are the longer; the posterior pair in contact with the median pair of a row of 6 scales that separate a pair of large, wedge-shaped sublabials; lower labials 3, the second enormous, the third scarcely noticeable.

Body annuli 222 between the 6 scales mentioned above and the 6 enlarged anals, 5 caudal annuli apart from the elongate dome-shaped terminal segment that occupies more than half the length of tail; 31 (20 + 11) segments in a midbody annulus, dorsal segments longer than broad; the median ventral segment resembling the ventral shield of a snake being broader than all the other 10 ventral segments together; 6 anals; no preanal pores.

Color.—In alcohol. Tip of snout horn colored, rest of head and body dirty white (? flesh-pink in life), tip of tail purplish brown.

Size.—Total length of holotype ♂, 193 (185 + 8) mm.

Diet.—Undigested jaws of soldier termites in intestines.